

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 have been amended to further define the invention, comply with current U.S. format practices, and correct minor typographical errors. Accordingly, claims 1-15 are pending.

Applicants respectfully assert that amended claims 1-15 do not introduce new matter.

**Objections to the Specification**

On pages 2 to 3 of the Office Action, guidelines for the preferred layout of the Specification are provided. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the Specification in accordance with the guidelines.

**Claim Objection**

On page 3 of the Office Action, claim 9 is objected to for a minor informality. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 9, 14, and 15 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

**Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a)**

On pages 3 to 8 of the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Warner et al. (US 3,528,220), and claims 4-10 and 12-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable over Warner et al. both singularly and in view of Nolan (US 6,399,030). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 recites a scrubber for the cleaning of gases including, in part, a plurality of scrubber stages arranged in a scrubber tower, wherein "at least one of the plurality of scrubber stages above a lowest one of said plurality of scrubber stages comprises a *ring-shaped fluid storage tank* arranged inside the scrubber tower," (emphasis added). In direct contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, Warner et al. merely discloses collecting trays 25 that drain collected scrubbing liquor into respective tanks 28. Here, Applicants respectfully assert that the collecting trays cannot be reasonable interpreted as being ring-shaped fluid storage tanks as Warner et al. explicitly requires, see col. 4, lines 54-67, for example, that the collecting trays 25 actually **drain** the collected scrubbing liquor. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Warner et al. fails to teach or suggest a scrubber for the cleaning of gases including, in part, a plurality of scrubber stages arranged in a scrubber tower, wherein "at least one of the plurality of scrubber stages above a lowest one of said plurality of scrubber stages comprises a ring-shaped fluid storage tank arranged inside the scrubber tower," as required by at least amended independent claim 1.

In addition, Applicants respectfully assert that Nolan can remedy the deficiencies of Warner et al., as detailed above. Specifically, Applicants respectfully assert that

Nolan is completely silent with regard to a ring-shaped fluid storage tank arranged inside a scrubber tower and arranged surrounding a central channel through which the gas that is to be cleaned can pass upwards. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the combined teachings of Warner et al. and Nolan fail to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with regard to at least amended independent claim 1.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully assert that Warner et al. and Nolan, whether taken singly or combined, fail to teach or suggest the combination of features recited by at least amended independent claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn.


This Response is believed to be fully responsive and to place the application in condition for allowance. Entry of the Amendment, and an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly requested. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this application.

Should the Examiner believe that any matters need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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